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Living abroad will literally broaden your horizons. I've been so lucky to have found an amazing lab and supportive professor at the University of California, San Diego, who have hosted me for 8 months. Victor Nizet was, even though he was extremely busy and successful, a very dedicated mentor who guided me in regular personal meetings. My internship as part of the master Molecular Mechanisms of Disease in Nijmegen focused on vaginal colonization and infection with Group B *Streptococcus* and *Candida albicans*. I tested whether pharmacological boosting of the host's own immunity would affect the level of colonization and infection with these pathogens. With the help of many of my lab members I was able to do multiple in vitro techniques and perform my own in vivo studies. We were very active outside the lab too, with many fun nights going out for dinner, drinks, doing karaoke, visiting the Safari park and more! Since you spent most of your time working with them, they had become kind of family to me: the kind who help each other survive late nights at the lab by filling up our wonderous snack drawer. After these 8 months, it was tough to say goodbye, but I was also ready to head home. I had a great goodbye lunch with my supervisors and professor and we had an awesome Rockstar dress up party (at the professor's house) & team-building high-rope adventure course with the whole lab.

Besides being the home of many amazing research institutes, San Diego has a breathtaking scenery. Weekend were often filled by days and barbecues at a beach or beautiful bay, enjoying a hike in the beautiful nature or going camping in the totally different environments of the nearby mountains and deserts. San Diego really lived up to all its expectations. Unfortunately, surfing wasn't really made for me, but the thrill of actually standing up did make some of the horrible waves & falls alright. Biking there was also a straight challenge: virtually no bike paths and hills everywhere! I've learned so much more about culture and other people in the 8 months I spend there than the 23 years I spend in the Netherlands. To come back to the first sentence, it has been a really great experience, both personal and academically!



Picture: Me and a labmember (PhD student) at the March for Science in San Diego with our own handmade signs.